## British Railroad Financiering.

British railroad financiering under different names includes about the same methods and the same classes of securities as in the United States. A corporation proposing to build a new line must first advertise in several prominent newspapers, telling with much detail where it is intended the road shall be run. The act of Parliament, for charter, as we would call it, secured, the land must be paid for, any dispute with a land owner being, if necessary, referred to the regular courts. In practice, however, an appeal is rarely made, and the companies prefer an exorbitant payment to the delay and cost of litigation; and so generally is this fact recognized that a new railroad is favored by English land owners scarcely more for the conveniences that it confers than for the undue land costs it must pay. As with us, railroad securities are divided into three classes, (1) ordinary shares corresponding to our "common" railroad stocks; (2) "preferential" shares like our preferred stocks or income bonds, paying a fixed rate of interest if the company earns it; and (3) debenture shares which carry with them right of foreclosure in case of a default of interest, and are as a rule, almost exactly equivalent to the first mortgage bonds of an American railroad. The maximum rate of interest on British preferential shares seems to be six per cent., and the average rate on the debenture shares is about four and one-half per cent. Just now, in this period of low interest rates, a perfectly safe debenture stock irredeemable sells in the London market at about 120. The largest dividend paid by any British railroad last year was ten and one-half per cent. returned by the Maryport & Carlisle line operated by the Great Western Company. It is a small road only forty-one miles long and with a capital of about $3,500,000. Of the great English lines the most prosperous is the Northeastern, which last year paid eight and a quarter per cent. on almost $100,000,000 of ordinary stock, which now sells in the market at about $172 for each share of $100. Like the United States, Great Britain is now passing through an era of railroad consolidation. Six corporations—the London & Northwestern, the Great Western, the Great Northern, the Midland, the Northeastern and the Caledonian—control already 8,338 miles of single and double track and $1,840,000,000 of invested capital. It may be roughly stated that half of the whole railroad system of Great Britain is under their management. One of them alone—the London & Northwestern Company—controls an invested capital of $500,000,000, and each of them has absorbed twenty or thirty subordinate lines, great and small. So far as can be judged, however, this swift and wide consolation is neither alarming nor distasteful to the British public. The newspapers speak rather approvingly of it on the plea of improved service, and no cry of "monopoly" has been raised. —*London Cor. N. Y. Post.*

## A Valet Who Knew His Business.

Lord Stratford's feeling of loyalty was as profound as that of a sincere believer in divine right must always be. Every member of the royal family was to him an object of unbounded deference. When the Duke of Cambridge was about to become his guest for a few days at the Embassy he went in his dressing-gown and slippers, at an early hour in the morning, to see that the rooms prepared for his Royal Highness were in perfect order. Finding the Duke's valet arranging the trunks and portmanteaus which had arrived, the Ambassador began to give him directions how they should be placed. The man left off working and stared at Lord Stratford. "I will tell you what it is," he said at last. "I know how his Royal Highness likes to have his things arranged better than you do. So you just shut up—and be off, will you, old feller?" Lord Stratford left the room in a towering passion, and calling one of the attaches, ordered him to go and tell that man who it was that he had ventured to address such language to. The attache soon returned with sparkling eyes. "Well, what did you say to him?" asked the Ambassador. "I said to him, my Lord, that the person to whom he had ventured to address such language was her Majesty's representative in Turkey." "Ah, quite right. And what was his answer?" "He answered, my Lord, that he had never said you warn't." It was a singular feature in Lord Stratford's somewhat hasty disposition that his anger would suddenly be appeased by anything which seemed to him ludicrous. It was so in this case, and he enjoyed a hearty laugh with the attache.—*Temple Bar.*

—While at work recently, at the Leroy (N. Y.) salt well, the workmen were surprised by the drill suddenly falling seventy-five feet. The supposition is that they have struck a large underground cavern. Continuing, they found the rock below very soft, and they then drilled at the rate of seventy feet a day, and are now down 350 feet. The old well was 450 feet deep when they first pumped up salt water. Developments of some kind may be expected soon from the present venture.

—Coffee culture bids fair to become one of the leading industries of Liberia. The soil and climate are eminently well adapted to it, and thousands of trees are being planted, while a ready market is found for all the crop.

—Miss Parnell has received letters from over one hundred ladies in this country who volunteer to go to Ireland to address public meetings and assist in the agitation, the majority refusing any salary.

## The Tricks of Mendicants.

The most profitable field in New York for street beggars, and the one in which they are most plenty, says the *Sun*, is from Fourteenth street to Twenty-third, between Broadway and Sixth avenue. This is the shopping district, and ladies, who are the best game for experienced mendicants, are to be found there in greater numbers than in any other part of the city. As the leaders in every trade are apt to be found occupying the best places, so the most expert beggars of the city are to be found in this district. Among those who become expert in begging, some have a natural aptitude for it, but the great majority have acquired their cunning by long apprenticeship.

On a recent afternoon a reporter saw a wretched-looking man hobbling along the east side of Sixth avenue, near Twentieth street. He seemed to be paralyzed on his left side. He turned into Twentieth street, and as the reporter passed close to him he recognized the beggar as a man whom he had heard telling the following story to an apparently less experienced mendicant in the Fourth Ward:

"Well, as I was a sayin', I was a cook aboard the brig Cheshire, from Lunnon to New York. On my last trip, just as she was goin' to leave the dock down here near Peck Slip, I thought I'd slip out and get somethink to drink afore we got away. To cut a long yarn short, I got drunk an' was left. My clothes an' money was aboard, an' I didn't have but thruppence in my pocket. When it came night I didn't have nowhere to go, an' as I was wonderin' wot I'd do about it, a young feller with spectacles came along. I stopped him an' told him I'd got lost in the streets, an' when I foun' my way to the dock my ship was gone without me. I remember that young feller well. He asked me a lot of questions which I answered true, except about the drunk. Then he gave me a half a dollar and told me to call at his rooms—somewhere on Washington Square—the next day, an' he'd give me a job until I could find a ship. When he went away I see in a minute wot a payin' business it was; so as soon as he got out of sight I tackled the next feller that came along. He didn't wait to hear what I said, but he said he knew I was a lyin' anyhow, an' he gave me five cents to get a drink with. I did wot he told me, an' then started again, but I only got seventeen cents more the whole night till I turned in—about eleven o'clock.

"That's how I got started; but about three months after, when the sailor dodge was gettin' wore out, I got sick with the small-pox. I was settin' in a bar-room down in Water street, when I first felt it comin' on. First I was cold and then I was hot, and I had a fearful pain in my back. After I sat in the bar-room about three hours, gettin' worse all the time, the barkeeper sent for an ambulance, and I was carried off to the hospital. When I came out of that my face was marked like it is now, and I was so weak that people could see I had been sick. I made $5 a day then for over a week, but when I began to look better I didn't make but about a dollar an' a half a day. By and by I didn't make even this much, and then seein' a man in Brooklyn one day making lots of money because he was paralyzed, I found out how to do it, and I've been working that racket off an' on ever since."

"How do you make your hand look so?" the listening mendicant asked.

"It's easy enough, you can do it yourself. Put your arm close to your side. Now lift up your hand to a level with your elbow and leave it hang loosely from the wrist. Now press in your thumb joint, and that's all there is about it. If you want the hand to tremble, press your arm against your side as hard as ever you can. That's right. It looks hard, but it ain't, and nobody wot didn't know the business would ever think you could sham it. Of course anybody could do the hobbling part."

## Vermin in Fowls.

Notwithstanding the cold days and nights we are now in the midst of, and all the precautions which the attentive poulterer has thus far adopted to keep the house-vermin under control, we should now watch for the reappearance of this pest within the building where the poultry congregate in January and forward to spring again.

As soon as the fowl-stock becomes accustomed to their new winter quarters, the roosts upon which they rest at night will be infested with lice, which accumulate rapidly after they once get a foothold afresh upon the perches.

Every one who keeps fowls is aware how pernicious and how insidious are the assaults of this active little enemy to domestic poultry, and those who have had the largest experience with this nuisance will appreciate our repeated hints regarding continual effort to keep this foe at bay.

In winter, then, as in the summer season, we shall find it good economy to preserve the fowls from this annoyance, as thoroughly as the thing is possible. With regular care in this direction, but little trouble will be suffered; and the nicer appearing flock, the healthier birds, and the more profitable to their owner will they prove if, as often as once in a fortnight through the winter, the perches are washed with kerosene and the fowls dusted with carbolic powder. This is the best plan we know of to keep vermin under at any season of the year.—*Poultry World.*

—A man with a small salary and large family says if pride goes before a fall, he would like to see Pride start on a little ahead of the price of coal and provisions.—*Boston Commercial Advertiser.*

## The Man Who helps His Wife.

Generally he is a little man.

He is fussy, and he wants a finger in every pie.

He orders everything, from the spring house cleaning to the setting of a new hoop on the washtub.

He gets up first in the morning, and helps to dress the children, and gets Tom into Bessie's pinafores, and Minnie into Sammy's knee-pants before his wife discovers the mistake, and then he says it is just as well. Let 'em go so that day. He makes the fire and scatters shavings from the woodshed to the kitchen, and spatters water over the polished surface of the stove, and looks black as thunder when his wife scolds and tells him to be careful; and he says he guesses she'd miss him if he was gone; and he guesses she'd find it was a poor stake in the fence, etc.; and he guesses if she had all the work to do herself she'd sing another song; and he should think that a man who was always helping his wife ought to be treated with some show of decency.

And he puts on a lachrymose expression, and if he were a woman would break into weeping, and the fat would be in the fire generally.

The man who helps his wife feels called upon to plan the dinner and advise about the breakfast and supper.

If he was a housekeeper, he says, he'd have different goings on! He'd see if the butcher would give him ten pounds of roast, when he asked for five—as if anybody wanted to live on roast beef a life-time! Variety, he tells his wife, is what is needed on a family table. If he could only be at home to plan, he'd show her how he would manage things! No need of having anything wasted. What if the weather is hot! That is no reason why things should sour. His mother used to bake pies over when they were in danger of molding. But then there are not many housekeepers like his mother.

He helps make the beds, and puts all the sheets on upside down and wrong-side up, for it is utterly impossible for any man living, be he peasant, saint, or philosopher, to tell which way sheets belong on a bed! It is one of those occult mysteries which the mind of the male sex can never be made to comprehend.

Just watch him clean up the room. He puts his boots in the closet on top of his wife's corsets, which have fallen down, and he tosses his dirty stockings into the drawer with her laces, and piles the ribbons, and bracelets, and newspapers, and cigar-stumps, and play-bills, and burnt matches, and wisps of hair from the comb, all together in a box, and when his wife dresses for afternoon it will take her an hour to find the very ribbon bow she wants to wear, and then it will smell as if it had been hung up in a bar-room ever since it was manufactured.

He brags to his friends about how he can do housework. We have heard him lots of times. He can cook a meal as well as any woman! Yes, sir! And as for running a house, if he only had the time to spare, he would astonish creation by his method of doing it!

And his wife listens, and says nothing, but she thinks of the grease he has spilled on the carpet, and the stove blacking he has spattered on the wall-paper, and the new sheet he tore in two getting it off the clothes-line, and the glass dishes he has broken by putting them in hot water, the soap he has left to melt in the bath-tub, the kettles he has ruined by burning his cookery to a cinder, the thousand and one vexations which his ignorance has brought upon her, and she wishes within herself that a man whose mission it is to help his wife had never been invented.

But, after all, we respect him, for if his efforts are not crowned always with success, his motive is a good one, and all the women of the neighborhood will recognize it, and wish Heaven had made them such a man!—*Kate Thorn, in N. Y. Weekly.*

## A Painful Duty.

A colored man living on Wilkins street and working on a new building on Hastings street fell from a scaffold a day or two ago and broke his leg. While waiting for a conveyance to take him home it was thought best to send somebody ahead to notify his wife, and the keeper of a corner-grocery was accordingly selected to proceed to the house and let her down easy. He found her at the wash-tub, and after the usual salute he started off with:

"Matlam, I have a painful duty to perform."

"Shoo! you doan' say so!" she replied, as she prepared to give a rinsed shirt the grapevine.

"Yes, madam, I am sent here to inform you that your husband——"

"Am he on anodder bust?" she asked, as he paused.

"Worse than that."

"Got inter jail?"

"Worse than that."

"Shoo! Has de ole man tumbled into de ribber?"

"No, ma'am, but he has tumbled from a scaffold and—and——"

"An' broke his neck?"

"No—only his leg. Yes, madam, he has broken his leg, and the men are bringing him home on a door."

"Am dat all? Why, when you first begun talkin' I 'spected we was gwine to be turned out on de street on account of de rent! Broke his leg, eh? Well, tell 'em to tote him right 'long in an' be keerful dat nuffin draps out of his pockets. Shoo! but you might hev told me all dat ober de gate, instead of comin' in heah an' skeerin' my heart cl'ar up to my chin!"—*Detroit Free Press.*

# Youths' Department.

## *SIR WILLIAM NAPIER AND LITTLE JOAN.*

Sir William Napier, one bright day,
Was walking down the glen—
A noble English soldier,
And the handsomest of men.

Through fields and fragrant hedge-rows
He slowly wandered down
To quiet Freshford village,
By pleasant Bradford town.

With look and mien magnificent,
And step so grand, moved he,
And from his stately front outshone
Beauty and majesty.

About his strong, white forehead
The rich locks thronged and curled,
Above the splendor of his eyes,
That might command the world.

A sound of bitter weeping
Came up to his quick ear,
He paused that instant, bending
His kingly head to hear.

Among the grass and daisies
Sat wretched little Joan,
And near her lay a bowl of delf,
Broken upon a stone.

Her cheeks were red with crying,
And her blue eyes dull and dim,
And she turned her pretty, woful face,
All tear-stained, up to him.

Scarce six years old, and sobbing
In misery so drear!
"Why, what's the matter, Posy?"
He said, "Come, tell me, dear."

"It's father's bowl I've broken;
'Twas for his dinner kept.
I took it safe, but coming back
It fell"—again she wept.

"But you can mend it, can't you?"
Cried the despairing child
With sudden hope, as down on her,
Like some kind god, he smiled.

"Don't cry, poor little Posy!
I cannot make it whole,
But I can give you sixpence
To buy another bowl."

He sought in vain for silver
In purse and pockets, too,
And found but golden guineas.
He pondered what to do.

"This time to-morrow, Posy,"
He said, "again come here,
And I will bring your sixpence,
I promise! Never fear!"

Away went Joan rejoicing—
A rescued child was she;
And home went good Sir William;
And to him presently

A footman brings a letter,
And low before him bends:
"Will not Sir William come and dine
To-morrow with his friends?"

The letter read: "And we've secured
The man among all men
You wish to meet. He will be here.
You will not fail us then?"

To-morrow! Could he get to Bath
And dine with Dukes and Earls,
And back in time? That hour was pledged—
It was the little girl's!

He could not disappoint her,
He must his friends refuse.
So "a previous engagement"
He pleaded as excuse.

Next day when she, all eager,
Came o'er the fields so fair,
As sure as of the sunrise
That she should find him there,

He met her, and the sixpence
Laid in her little hand,
Her woe was ended, and her heart
The lightest in the land.

How would the stately company,
Who had so much desired
His presence at their splendid feast,
Have wondered and admired!

As soldier, scholar, gentleman,
His praises oft are heard—
'Twas not the least of his great deeds
So to have kept his word!

—*Celia Thaxter, in St. Nicholas.*

## TWO BOYS.

"C-a-t, cat; c-a-t, cat; c-a-t, cat."

These words were uttered by a voice in a tiny, unfinished room in the pitch of the roof. A small piece of tallow candle spluttered and flared on the window-sill, throwing strange shadows into the dim corners and among the rafters overhead. A young man in rough clothes was in the room leaning over a book held close to the candle. He was spelling out the words slowly and painfully, over and over, "C-a-t, cat; c-a-t, eat; b-a-t, bat."

At last he heard the clock down stairs give a long w-h-i-r-r-r-r, and then begin to strike. He looked up and counted—twelve. Then he closed the book, blew out the candle, hastily threw off his clothes, and was soon sound asleep beside his companion, Ned, who had been already three hours in bed.

The sun had not yet risen when he awoke. In a moment he was up, and dressed, and studying away again. H-a-t, hat; h-a-t, hat; and so on through all the ats. Then he began again.

"Be you up, boys?" cried a rough voice down stairs. "Come, hurry up and git to work."

Ned rolled slowly over in bed, and stretched his arms, and yawned.

"Oh, what a fool you be, Jack Lewis," he drawled out in a sleepy tone. "Don't you git enough work without stickin' over them books?"

"I don't care," answered Jack. "I'm bound to get an education. I've never had a chance yet, since I've been bound out, but I'll be my own master in a year now, and the schoolmaster he's put an idea or two into my head."

"Well, you're a fool, that's all," said Ned.

A year had passed by. It was the first day of school, and the children were flocking toward the little black school-house. The teacher, who was seated on a high platform behind a desk, wiped his glasses, rapped on the desk, and called the school to order.

He arranged the classes—first the scholars in advanced arithmetic and geography and history; then, a class in decimals and grammar; and so on till he came to the last.

"All those who have never studied fractions, or grammar, or geography, will rise," he said.

Five or six little girls, with long hair and short dresses, and two small boys in short pants, stood up. And one other stood up, too. He was six feet tall, and was clumsy and poorly dressed. It was Jack.

The teacher looked down at him and repeated what he had said.

"You misunderstood me," he added.

"No, sir," said Jack, firmly. "I belong to this class."

Several of the children giggled. One of the boys threw a great spit-ball, that struck him on the back of the head.

"I can't help it, said Jack, with face as red as fire. "This is the first chance I've ever had to learn, and I'm a-going to take it." And he sat down and was soon studying away at an example—add 2-5 to 3-5.

"Baby boy!" cried one of the scholars at recess.

"Spell fool," cried another.

"Where did you go to college?"

"When did Columbus discover the Mississippi?"

"Add one apple and two dogs."

But poor Jack did not look up. He was studying away at his old spelling-book, which was thumbed and dog-eared and torn; m-e-a-s-u-r-e, measure; p-l-e-a-s-u-r-e, pleasure.

"I say," cried one of the boys at last; "what kind of a mother have you got if she didn't teach you anything?"

Jack was on his feet in a moment. His face was flushed and his hands clenched. He seized the boy by the collar, and was just about to throw him, when he stopped.

"What be I about?" he said, slowly. "If you was my size, I'd give you a trouncing you'd remember. But there, you're only a baby!"

And he sat down again on the door-step and began to pore over the old spelling-book.

One of the young girls in the upper class, named Florence West, came up and stood beside him.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves, boys," she said. "You don't know what a hard time he's had to get along. He's been bound out for five years past, and has never had a chance to go to school. But he's working hard now to make up for lost time, and we ought to help him instead of laughing at him."

Jack looked up gratefully, and his face was covered with blushes. He almost thought an angel had come down to help him.

Just then the master's bell rang, and they all went in. That day Jack stood at the head of his little class. In two weeks he led the class above.

At the end of the year, the friends of the scholars had gathered at the exhibition in the school-house. The teacher rose. Every sound was hushed.

"I have something remarkable to tell you," he said. "Last autumn, a young man of twenty-one entered the lowest class in my school. He has earned his food and lodging by chopping wood and otherwise aiding a kind woman of the village who desired to help him. All his spare time has been spent in his studies. He has made up all the studies of the lower classes, and I am happy to say he has the highest rank in the school. You may take the seat in front, Lewis. Had it not been for this, the first place would have been held by Miss Florence West, who will please take the other vacant chair."

What was Jack's surprise as he walked up the aisle to hear the audience favoring him with hearty applause.

But for all the honor, he had only been through the district school. Now he had all summer to make some money to carry him through the next year at the high school.

Years passed on. Let me picture a scene "out West."

"Good-morning, Mr. Lewis," said a poor, shiftless-looking man, walking into the office of the Hon. John Lewis, and standing before him. "Do you remember me?"

"No, sir."

"No; I didn't suppose you would. My name is Ned Barnes. I was bound out with you to Farmer Harris when we were boys. But you've got on in the world, and I haven't. I don't know how it is, but some folks seem to have good luck, and others has poor luck. You always had good luck and got ahead. I thought p'raps you'd find me a job, just for the sake of old times."

"Yes, indeed," said Jack; for it was he grown up to middle life, after going through college and building up a fine law business. "If you'll go up to my house, Florence, my wife, will fit you out in some decent clothes, and then I'll see what I can do for you."

These were the men who, twenty years before, had been in that little attic-room, the one snoring in bed, and the other thumbing his old spelling-book. That was where the good luck and the poor luck began.—*Youth's Companion.*

## The Newspapers of the World.

From a late publication it is learned that there are published 34,274 newspapers and periodicals, with a circulation of (in round numbers) 116,000,000 copies, the annual aggregate circulation reaching 10,592,000,000 copies, or about six and one-half papers per year to each inhabitant of the globe. Europe leads with 19,557, and North America follows with 12,400, the two together making over nine-tenths of all the publications in existence. Asia has 775; South America, 699; Australasia, 661, and Africa, 132. Of all these, 16,500 are printed in the English language, 7,800 in German, 3,850 in French, and over 1,600 in Spanish. There are 4,020 daily newspapers, 18,274 tri-weeklies and weeklies, and 8,508 issued less frequently. It appears that while the annual aggregate circulation of publications in the United States is 2,600,000,000, that of Great Britain and Ireland is 2,260,000,000.

—Washington University, at St. Louis, has 1,285 students and eighty professors.